

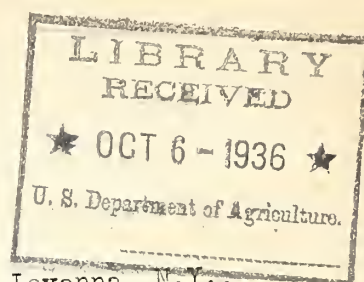
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SELLING WHAT THE BUYER WANTS



A radio talk by Mrs. Franc Hall Morse, Cedarcliff Farms, Levanna, N.Y., delivered in the Home Demonstration Radio Hour, July 1, 1936, and broadcast by a network of 49 associate NBC radio stations.

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Greetings to my listeners and especially to those country women who have skill in food production and would like to earn some money. It is to you I am happy to tell the story of our cooperative market. Just a group of about 15 country women, inexperienced in marketing or cooperatives, yet we sold \$4200 worth of products in 14 months. Our group took in all ages from young housewives to grandmothers. Each was able to produce some foods of superior quality, was dependable, willing to work with others and learn from criticism. One consignor used to say we must have the criticism whether it be "rolled in sugar or wrapped in vinegar."

Our success depended upon satisfying our customers, which meant superior quality and catering to the wishes of customers as the usual commercial food shop can not do.

We organized and appointed a standards committee. The committee was present on market days and if inferior or damaged products came in, the committee returned them. We sold only home products,--fresh fruits, vegetables, flowers, poultry and dairy products and baked goods. We guaranteed satisfaction to customers or refunded their money. We had two sources of help in developing quality products. First, visits from the manager of another, older, market; and second, a specialist from our State College of Home Economics. She came at intervals and tested, criticised, and advised about all our products. We felt it would take a long time to develop the standards we aimed at. It does take time, and yet our home made products did improve with reassuring speed. First, and last, we believed, superior quality is the prime requisite of success. Yet customers also like a market which caters to some of their special needs or desires. Instances of these special wishes were the customers who asked if we could supply Philadelphia scrapple; several wanted Boston baked beans, rice puddings, stuffed tomatoes, clam chowder, vegetable soup, and home canned fruits. Some mothers purchased our candies for their children as we could assure them of their wholesomeness. We had as large a variety as we could because customers not only like their old favorites but new ones also. Many of our customers liked to buy in small quantities for a small family. Some sought carefully prepared food for young children or for invalids.

The largest sales were on home made bread and rolls. Next came poultry products. We had a large sale on fresh dressed poultry of superior quality. In order to supply our customers with this we had to put in a large refrigerator.

Each of us,--we called ourselves consignors--had our specialties and no one else could supply our particular foods unless the consignor resigned or could not supply enough. If, because of illness or other circumstances, a consignor could not supply her products, some other members of the group carried

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her part of the marketing until she could again take it up. This is one of the great advantages of a cooperative market. We hired two saleswomen for our market days which were Wednesdays and Saturdays.

How did we finance our start? The first day everyone donated her products. We had \$25 from this first day's sales which made us rich enough to carry on. Thereafter each consignor gave 5 percent of her gross sales. At first a store granted us some space free of charge. Later we rented a store and purchased our own show cases and other equipment. At rare intervals when needed, we gave more than 5 percent from our sales. Careful management kept our expenses low.

You may wonder if we worked well together. On the whole, yes. Both antagonisms and friendships grew up. However some antagonisms are a part of every progressive enterprise. The most important thing was that our enterprise prospered. Some members of the group were so cooperative and generous to all that they made selfishness hide its head and give place to enthusiastic effort for the progress of our market.

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